



The Promethean

The literary journal of Concordia University-Portland, Oregon

Fall/Winter 2003

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The Promethean is published semiannually by The College of Theology, Arts, and Sciences of Concordia University. The content of *The Promethean* is chosen by an editorial staff of faculty and student volunteers and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of The College of Theology, Arts, and Sciences of Concordia University. All works are copyrighted. Submissions may be edited for brevity or grammar unless otherwise arranged. Submissions are welcome. Please send material to promethean@cu-portland.edu.

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The Promethean is printed on recycled paper with soy inks.

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COVER ART BY TONY NGUYEN

THE TRUTH OF POETRY AND FICTION: A NOTE ON PROMETHEAN CREATION

Kim Stafford—Director, Northwest Writing Institute

Winning Entries:

“Father” (Spring/Summer 2002)	Brian Blums
fiction	
“Rounding Second...” (Spring/Summer 2002)	Mark Brittain
poetry	

Comment:

I remember sitting at a tiny chair in an elementary school library as I waited for a group of children. We were going to talk about writing, the life of creation, and as I waited I saw a curious thing. To clarify the world for the young, the school librarian had separated the book collection into two categories. Above the north book-wall was a sign: “Fiction—Not True.” Above the south wall: “Non-fiction—True.”

If only life could be that simple.

Every day I find myself surrounded by the partial truths and frequent lies of writing and speech presented as non-fiction. My newspaper tells me tragedy, failure, crime, and lets that pass as a true assessment of us all. In memo after memo, my college tells me my work is about budget figures, class enrollments. And advertising everywhere informs me what I should want. The truth of all this, I believe, often resides in what is not said. The real news is about reconciliation, how we keep on. My college is really about a moment of resonant silence in a small class. And I don’t want what I can buy; I want what I can understand, create, and give my life to. I want true things.

True things come to me in poetry and fiction when it is written with courage, insight, and grace. This is the fire for which Prometheus rightly risked life and freedom. True things are complex, require both heart and mind, and produce a spiritual reality that lies behind the visible, the measurable.

When fiction and poetry are true, you know this with your body. The words of the text “ring true,” speed your pulse, lead you toward the person you will be. This is why poetry and fiction have a place at the heart of learning now. They are the arts that connect us, rather than merely inform us, advance us, or enable our economy or preeminence.

I was asked to select two winning pieces from the Fall and Spring issues of *The Promethean*, 2001-2002. I had a rich reading experience, and I’ve done that. Wonderful work. But beyond the winners—the “news” of my judgment—I want to honor all the writers who took the time to write a story or poem that is true. You help us all create the new world.

IN JANUARY

Jennifer Smith

When I see men fall
Under the ice
The white ice
I think of you

You were the first

With blackened
Broken hands
Clawing at
The water

You meant the most

The others
slipped away
You struggled
for the shore

There was hate in your eyes

And when I sip
Mulled wine
In the cold
January mornings

I dream of the way you died

BLACK POMEGRANATES

Jennifer Smith

Stupidly,
but not meaning to offend
they tell me that I am like the earth.

"Do I smell of blood,"

I ask them,

"Of dirt and rotting trees?"

"Yes," they say,

"especially of blood."

It's as if I've been swallowed
by the ground, though I've
yet to eat a seed.

Apparently I have
the distinctive metal taste
of black pomegranates,
ripened without the sun.

Timothy Allen

shuffle step slide
 my feet run 'cross the floor connecting break beats and high hats
 swiftly my hips glide changing direction of my flaps
 shuffle ball step
 stop
 slap slap slap
 Now Oscar was a groovy type brother that imitated Clyde
 with his signature stomp
 But when the melody slowed so did his rhythm
 yet holding those patterns which spelled out his autism
 not a disability but ability
 to find those empty spots to fill in with the sounds he let out
 creating a dance that plays with time
 and defines his mind
 behind spoken word rhymes
 You don't need no instrumental
 Them feet make the beat

Melanie Mitchell

The dark morning air is still. The fog that has settled down in the valley creates an eerie silence. Quiet storefronts and houses line the streets. Soft lamplights glow in the windows of scattered houses as families quietly stir from their beds. A soft glow can be seen coming up over the hill, making the lawns sparkle as the dew reflects the light. The glow grows brighter and more focused as the source draws closer. Suddenly, giant beams of light pierce the darkness, blurring in the fog. The loud roar of several engines rumbles through the silence as the busses make their daily journey to the high school. Solemn faces look out into the foggy darkness as they approach their destination. As the yellow giants line the front of the school, the roar is quieted as the abrupt hiss emits from the folding doors and the breaks are set. Teenagers rise lazily from their seats and sleepwalk through the main doors. Scattered voices rise over the sound of shuffling feet. Conversations between friends and acquaintances about weekend plans and the latest gossip begin to sweep through the crowd as they approach the hallways lined with cold, metal lockers. The slamming of lockers reverberates through the stark white hallways. Cheesy neon flyers plaster the lockers and walls, giving off a fake sense of enthusiasm and excitement for the upcoming dance.

Swimming through the sea of her peers, Angela washes up near her locker. Immersed in thought she coaxes the combination numbers on the dial to the correct positions. Turn right to 15: her age in two months; left to 37: the price of the sweater she saw in the window of Nordstrom's last night that she just had to have; nudge back to the right; 29, the number of days she'd been dating Robert. With a swift kick to the bottom of the metal door, the squeaky hinges opened in protest. As she put away the books she had hauled home the night before in order to finish the mountain of homework her teachers had mounded on her, she remembered the lecture she had received from her parents. They insisted that she wasn't applying herself, that if her grades didn't improve she would be spending her long, glorious vacation staring out the grim windows of summer school. They just didn't understand that she was trying, otherwise why on Earth would she spend her nights attempting to scale the piles of homework? Whatever, parents just don't understand what it's like to be young. Angela fished through her jeans pocket for the new tube of lipstick she bought last night, the one Cosmo raved about. Removing the cap, she twisted the base, revealing an intense shade of berry. She brought the angled stick to her upper lip and swept the color over it. After repeating the careful motion on her lower lip she blotted her lips together and smiled dazzlingly into the mirror magnetized to the inner door of her locker. Angela wasn't what some might call drop-dead gorgeous with her natural brown hair bleached to a tell-tale fake orange tint and her crooked teeth that she had begged her parents to straighten with braces, to which they replied with their usual "no money" speech.

"Forget it Angela," she muttered to herself as the smile vanished and she reached into her locker for her history book, "You'll never look like the girls in Cosmo."

"What babe?" came a voice from behind her. Startled, Angela glanced up to the mirror again and staring back at her was Robert, her latest love interest.

"Oh, nothing," she replied, smiling to hide what she was thinking about, "I was just talking to myself." He put his arm around her waist, pulled her close to him and leaned down to whisper in her ear.

"Come outside, I need to talk to you." He didn't wait for her to respond, but grabbed her hand and lead her out the heavy metal doors at the end of the hall. The cold air enveloped them as they plunged into the thick fog. They rounded the corner of the school and he stopped walking.

"What is so important that we have to talk in the freezing cold?" Angela asked shivering. He didn't answer but instead started kissing her.

"Ugh, *that* figures. He doesn't even consider what I want, just starts making out with me. I guess that's the price I have to pay to date a jock." She thought to herself. Robert was a freshman on the JV basketball team, one of the starters. He was even pretty cute, a catch according to the other freshmen girls. She would have to put up with the unwanted affection to keep looking cool. He was always coming on to her and lately had been really pouring it on to get her in bed. He hadn't won, yet, but she was concerned that if she didn't put out soon that he would kick her to the curb and find another freshman who would be more than willing to date a jock. Really, she wanted to do her own thing and just have fun. Her true friends had been neglected for so long since she'd been with Robert that they had all cut ties with her. She longed to go for ice cream and sit watching chick flicks with the girls, but by doing that she would risk being un-cool. She was afraid of being a loser, a loner; but by being with Robert, no one could see that side of her. All they saw was "Robert's girlfriend."

She was abruptly wrenched from her internal dialogue by the obnoxious bell signaling that they were again late for class. She slid out of his clutches and rushed off to class. He called after her that he would see her at lunch, to which she just waved behind her. She ran down the hall, past the teacher yelling for her to slow down. She slid into her seat in the back of Mr. Bauer's history class, undetected by the teacher with his nose in the grade book. Nicole leaned over and asked her under her breath, "Hey Angela, did you get into a fight with a vacuum cleaner? Looks like the vacuum won!" Mr. Bauer looked up from taking roll to ask Nicole if she had something to share with the class to which Nicole replied, "No," but made sucking sounds to Angela, grinning. A couple of students around them glared toward her as Angela's hand slid up the side of her neck. Everything felt normal, *what the hell was Nicole talking about?* She felt something cold gently nudge her left elbow. The girl next to her was discreetly handing her a compact. Angela took the compact and quietly opened it and angled it at her face. Lower on her neck was a mark. On closer examination she realized what Nicole had teased her about, a bright

intense. Angela slowly closed the compact and handed it back to the girl sitting to her left without making eye contact. She hated Nicole for laughing and pointing. Now everyone could plainly see what had happened. It wasn't like Nicole had a boyfriend to make out with and leave hickeys on her.

Nicole was an outspoken freshman that always had something to say about everything. Often times, what she had to say was pretty irrelevant, but she tried to sound smart in every topic nonetheless. She was the third child from her family to attend the same high school, so she had to live up to the standards that all the teachers had for her; not to mention the other students. Her oldest brother had been captain of the football team, debate team and student body president as a senior two years ago. She often heard girls in the hall talking about him as they passed the wall of fame in front of the leadership room; saying how he was totally hot and how much they'd love to date a college guy – a thought that made Nicole so nauseated that she was afraid she might vomit right in front of these girls. Maybe if he wasn't her brother he might be cute, but the way they all go on about him made her completely sick. Her older sister, now a junior was just the same. An overachiever too, she was already on the homecoming committee and was a starter on the varsity volleyball team. Nicole tried out for volleyball earlier that fall but had missed the ball every time it came over the net in her direction. She was immediately cut from the team. She would love to just sit back and be herself, figure out what she was good at or wanted to do, but until she could find something she could excel at she would have to pretend to be smart in everything. She certainly couldn't back down now anyways. People were starting to notice her and she didn't want to risk being called a loser; she wanted to be popular like her older brother and sister, a task that was bound to take a lot of work.

Nicole gazed at the clock on the wall above Mr. Bauer. Thank God there was only five more minutes of American History left. Who really cares about this stuff anyways? Everyone they were studying about in class was dead; why not learn about people who were still around? She started doodling on the front of her orange binder, which was already covered in artwork. Nicky secretly loved to draw and had endless stacks of drawing pads lining her shelves at home. On the sly she was looking at a couple of art schools for when she graduated from high school. She wondered what her parents would say if they heard that their youngest daughter's aspiration was to be a starving artist. This was a future that was absolutely unworthy of her parents' approval, especially with one son in law school and a daughter that was looking at a career in medicine. She drew a very detailed table in the corner of her binder and remembered that she had promised to meet one of the girls from the softball team to see about trying out for the team at lunch today. She would really have to hustle to her locker and put everything away in order to meet the girls before the table was too full for her and she'd have to sit alone. She glanced over at Angela who was now sitting with her head propped up on her arm, while simultaneously trying to pull her sweater up to cover the hickey that was growing increasingly purple. *"I'm sure glad I'm not the one who has to look ridiculous like that!"* she thought to herself, *"That's got to do terrible things for her image."*

purple hickey. Next to her she could hear Nicole snickering, still quietly making that horrible sucking sound. Angela felt the blood rush to her face, making it blaze crimson which in turn made the purple of the hickey much more. The bell rang and Mr. Bauer yelled after them to read chapters 6 & 7 in the text for next class. "*Yeab right*," Nicole thought as she walked down the hall, "*Like I want to waste even more of my time learning about people and things that don't matter.*" All of a sudden she heard kids yelling and lockers banging. This was much louder than the usual horsing around that went on in the halls between classes. Curious, Nicole craned her neck to see further down the hall and already there was a crowd forming around the initiators of the ruckus. As she got closer she could hear her peers yelling obscenities at one or the other of the two guys who were fighting. She didn't recognize either of the two that were in the middle of the fiasco but they were sure getting a couple of good shots in. One of the boys had blood coming from his nose and the other had a pretty big gash on his left cheek. No sooner had she asked the guy next to her what had started it all when Coach Braun came roaring around the corner to break it up. He muscled through the crowd as the students fought to catch the last seconds of the brawl. Finally he reached the center and swiftly dodged out of the way as one of the guys was thrown across the hall. Coach Braun stood between the boys as two of the campus security guards came to assist in pulling the boys down the hall toward the principal's office. By the time the guys had reached the office they had somewhat cooled off and the two security guards were able to leave them to wait for Principal Saville. They had barely sat down when Principal Saville threw open the door to his office and stormed into the main office. Although not a huge man, Principal Saville had a no-nonsense air about him.

"So, we meet again Mr. Morrison," he said coolly, "I warned you to not cause any more trouble around this campus. This is the last straw for you."

"But Principal Saville, I..." stammered Aaron Morrison.

"I don't want to hear it Mr. Morrison. I've heard enough of your excuses to last a lifetime. Please stay out here while Mrs. Blue calls your mother; I believe her number is on speed dial. If you, Mr. Anderson, will please step into my office we will discuss your consequences as well." With that he escorted Aaron's fighting partner into his office. He then leaned out the door to his office to say to Mrs. Blue, his secretary,

"Please call Mrs. Morrison and inform her that her son Aaron has been expelled from our high school. She is to pick him up immediately. Thank you Mrs. Blue." And closed his door.

Aaron sat back in his chair and rested his head on the wall. He could feel the gash on his cheek starting to swell. He touched it and when he brought his hand back it had a little bit of blood on it. He wiped his hand on his torn jeans leg and listen as Mrs. Blue talked to his mother at work. He could tell by how Mrs. Blue was talking to his mother that she was furious and possibly hysterical. He felt bad about making her upset

him, he could explain what that guy had said; why he had to hit him. That no good son of a bitch had laughed about how he was going to be Aaron's boss someday and make him do the worst jobs possible because that is what he deserved. He had talked about how Aaron was worthless and so was his no good mom, saying that they should get out of town to rid it of such an eye sore. That no one could stand seeing them because they were such a pitiful couple. Mr. Saville couldn't be that heartless to not understand. If he would just let Aaron explain it could all be resolved. But of course he wouldn't; Aaron couldn't even get two words out of his mouth in that office without being told to shut up. He heard Mrs. Blue wrapping up her conversation with his mother and then the sound of the hard plastic receiver being placed back in its cradle.

"You can go up to your locker and collect your things. You have five minutes to be back in this office; your mother is on her way." Said Mrs. Blue frostily.

Aaron carefully rose from his chair and walked out of the office without a word. The halls were deserted except for the occasional straggler late for class. He approached freshman hall and saw some students lean in their chairs to get a look at him out the door of their classroom. Aaron lowered his head and continued on his way. He knew he had a reputation around this school for being a troublemaker. But really, it wasn't his fault. He had to be tough; at least that's how he felt. His dad had left his mom when he was just a baby and left her nothing. For as long as he could remember they had been struggling to make ends meet. His mom worked days at an office downtown and on the weekends she was a waitress at a little diner. She had guys in and out of her life but none that lasted too long. He felt like he had to protect her so he often times got into shouting matches with the scummy guys who picked up on his mom, sometimes leaving him bruised up if the guys were rowdy. He didn't have any friends around school because he didn't have the money to buy the latest trends or drive a cool car. Everyone around that school was just worried about material stuff anyways; who needed friends like that? He was a loner by choice, or at least so he thought.

He turned the corner and approached his locker. He didn't even bother with the combination lock, just kicked the bottom and yanked up on the handle. It didn't open. Aaron just couldn't take anymore and punched the door of the pale, ugly locker and yelled at the top of his lungs. A yelp came from across the hall and down a little way. He looked up and saw a mousy girl at her locker, from which the whimper must have escaped. He just scowled at her and kicked the locker again; this time it creaked open. He yanked out his tattered backpack and shoved all of his personal belongings into it, leaving behind all the textbooks. Slamming the door as hard as he could, Aaron turned on his heels and marched back toward the office, not even glancing back at the girl he had scared.

Renee's eyes followed after him. She had no idea what was wrong with that boy but it must be something bad; he looked really mean. After he rounded the corner, Renee turned to search further into her locker. Always forgetful, she had lost her assignment for math class and had been sent back to her locker by the teacher to

but he couldn't help getting in that fight. If Principal Saville would just listen to find it. Mrs. Wright had been anything but sweet when she found out that Renee didn't have her papers.

"Can't you ever do anything right Renee?" she spat, "Go get your assignment and don't come back until you have it in your hand to give to me."

Renee had taken the hall pass sheepishly and shuffled out of the classroom, her classmates laughing at her quietly. Now, in the hallway she could still hear the echoes of their constant laughter in her head, always making fun of plain, ugly Renee. There, crumpled in the back of the top shelf of her locker she found the missing assignment. She pulled it out of the locker and started to close the door when the neon flyer caught her eye. In bold letters it read, "Do you have a date yet? Get ready for Homecoming!" Oh, how Renee longed to be popular, to be asked to the dance. She would buy a long blue dress to match the blue eye shadow her aunt had given her for Christmas last year, a dress with gloves to match. In that beautiful dress they would surely crown her homecoming princess and everyone would say that Renee Russell was the most glamorous girl to ever walk the halls of their high school. "Reality check Renee," she mumbled to herself. She quietly shut her locker and started walking down the hall back to math class. Looking down at the floor she realized that she couldn't bear to go back to class with Mrs. Wright yelling at her and her classmates laughing. She stopped short of the classroom and turned into the bathroom. As she pushed through the heavy wooden door she saw two cheerleaders standing at the mirror, straightening their uniforms. They looked up from their primping and giggled, turned to each other and laughed harder. By the time they walked out the door they were practically hysterical and making hurtful remarks about Renee to each other. She looked into the mirror and a pimple-faced, greasy haired, four-eyed geek stared back at her. In the reflection she could see the posters taped to the stall doors preaching "Just Say No" with beautiful teenage models posing in the background. Why couldn't she look like that? No matter how hard she tried she could never overcome the label she had acquired. She backed up against the wall and slowly slid down it to the come to rest on the floor. She pulled her knees up to her chest. Finally, all the hurt had come to the surface and she just couldn't hold back the pain any longer. Sobs wracked her body as the tears soaked the sleeves of her sweatshirt. She was crying for the mean things her peers said, for the beautiful girls in every ad on TV or in magazines, for her parents who were just as geeky as she was and for the guidance counselor that told her this was just a phase. She cried so long that she finally just ran out of tears and energy. She was exhausted and emotionally drained. Her eyes burned so bad she swore there was a fire behind them. She closed her eyes gently and the next thing she knew the door was opening to the bathroom. She jerked her head up and saw girls streaming in, looking at her, disgusted that she had dared to come into their hangout. Behind them,

completely. The waves of students ebbed and flowed toward the cafeteria, following the scent of burnt French fries, stale pizza, and wilted lettuce. Renee fiddled with the student body card in her pocket that would buy her the needed nutrition to get her through the rest of the day. Not paying attention to where she was going she walked right into Ms. Thornton. Squeaking out a quiet, "Excuse me," Renee was swept away toward the mob that gathered in front of the food counter.

Ms. Thornton was posted at cafeteria duty, again. Being the rookie teacher at the school she always got the least desirable jobs that the other faculty didn't want to bother with. She watched the students in their various cliques and thought of all of her adolescent psychology courses in college. Nothing they taught her could have prepared her for the harsh realities of public school life. Coming from a small town in Idaho, Mary Thornton hadn't always been the most popular. She had had quite a few friends and knew most everyone but she was never in the limelight, which was how she liked it. Most of those friends had been scattered across the country after high school, save the few that stayed in their hometown, and she had lost contact with all of them. She had moved here after finishing her college education and decided that she needed a new start. Out on her own, away from everyone and everything she knew, Mary felt somewhat lonely. The faculty at the school was all on tenure and had known each other almost their entire teaching careers. There was little room for a newcomer. She watched the students in the cafeteria who were eating alone and she understood how they felt. No teacher could hang out at the students' table she knew, so instead she stood on the sidelines of the cafeteria, just watching. When the bell rang, signaling the end of lunch period, the students washed into one another and crashed down the hallway toward their next class. Mrs. Thornton was swept into the sea of bodies as she meandered toward her own classroom. There she lay out the necessary handouts and got the overhead projector in position for the lesson she would be teaching today. As the students shuffled in one of the boys walked up to her, Jeremy, the high school's star soccer player.

"Mrs. Thornton, I missed class last week because we had districts, can I get the assignment?"

"Sure." She replied as she dug through her stack of papers. "Um, Jeremy, I was grading the test that we took two classes ago and I noticed that your scores were a little low. Is anything going on that you'd like to tell me about, or were you just having an off day?" She found the assignment she was looking for and handed it to Jeremy.

"Oh, must have just been one of those days. I've been so busy with soccer I forgot to study. Don't worry Mrs. Thornton; I'll pull my grade up. Thanks for the assignment," he said as he took the paper and sat down at his desk. As the rest of the students trickled in he thought about the upcoming state championship. There were going to be recruiters from several of the top colleges there to check out the players. If he didn't perform well he would miss out on an opportunity to get a scholarship to

out the open bathroom door, she could see the crowds leaving their classes. Class must be over. She got up from the floor and shuffled past the girls that were standing, staring at her. She pushed through the heavy door again, head lowered, and entered the sea of people. Lost in the vastness of them, Renee just became a mere speck, then was lost play and a chance to go to a good school. The pressure had really been on from the coach for him to do well. The championship was riding on his performance, as he was the captain and the strongest player. The truth was that he was so stressed out with playing soccer and practicing all night that his grades in all of his classes were slipping. Between that and never seeing his family and friends, well, except for his teammates, he was feeling like he had to carry this burden alone. The school had a pep rally for the team the night before and he had been honored as player of the year. Coach had even said that the championship lay in his very competent hands. What if he didn't play well? He'd be letting the whole school down. *So much for concentrating in class*, Jeremy thought to himself. The more he listened to the lecture by Ms. Thornton, the more he started to get tired. The long hours on the soccer field were really starting to wear on him. *I'll just close my eyes for a minute, and then I'll be able to concentrate.*

SLAM! Jeremy sat up in his desk immediately. It was his teammate Cody who had slammed a history book on his desk.

"Are you ready to go? We've got practice in fifteen minutes. I thought we could do some practice on our own before that."

"Yeah, sure." Jeremy said as he shoved his books in his backpack and slung it over his shoulder. The two walked out the door and into the hallway where all the students were rushing rapidly toward the front of the school in order to catch their rides home. Jeremy and Cody walked out to the front hall and then veered off course from the rest of the roaring rapids of the crowd and toward the locker room. As he turned to see where Cody was he watched the busses roll away as they made their way to take the students back to their homes. He wished he could be on one of those busses, going back to his house to sit on the couch watching TV. But instead he was off to another grueling practice and stressful evening.

Behind him the students crossed one another as they left the school. The busses rumbled off into the distance and the steady flow of cars packed tight with teenagers slowed to a trickle. The parking lot was silent again as they all went their separate ways until they would come back to be alone together again.

Tennille Wright

Death was just another dream softly
lined when he approached his first coffin.
It was wide open and his father lay
folded inside like a baby sleeping.

He was young in curiosity and it possessed him
to touch the upturned face of inheritance. He
placed his fingertip on death it lightly moved skin
above the bone of an orange knuckle.

Boldly, he told his mom that father smelled
of carrots, her brow formed a thin cross against
her pale forehead and he knew to be silent. He
sank into the blackness of his child suit and
thought of the strange word, carrot. The kid
within wants to break it down. Two words
lie here, care and rot. He asked his mother
a few years later if father was all bones
now, carelessly she told him, he might be.

There is so much he wants
to uncover, so much
underground he doesn't
remember. He digs now with
large knuckles, they look a
lot like his father's
fingers, rough and
clumsy, with large
grooves and scars
carved by
the dirty and
greedy
hands of
time.

Tennille Wright

This world is a
jealous world, her tight viral roots of
ignorant money sing sweeter
than Sophia, we work for her fruit
of pollution that shrouds
the openness of sky.

Originally we weren't here
for this kind of
work.
Without ultimate
cures,
doctors still have their businesses
taking up tables complete with silverware and
bills,
changing hands and
bodies
everyday, like paper placemats.

Surgical gloves wade through what we know of
life,
the cool heavens meeting warm reds in an airy liquid dance.
Scientists continue to catalog and soothe
us, epidural needles kiss us like
fig leaves sown to our skin,
but we are still
naked
from learning and hungry for wisdom.

Perhaps in purity there is a newspaper we
don't yet know how to read, a banquet
we can't digest, and immortality we cannot wrap
ourselves in.
Maybe we breathe it everyday but it is larger than sky
so we let it pass through us: a god with healing consistency resting
like dried blood on his hands, the effortless, omnipotent, voice of love.

Sarah Hames

Whether happy or sad,
I only want to live.

Whether night or day,
I only want to dream.

Whether today or forever,
I only want to love.

But in this very moment,
I only want to be...

Becky L. Delaware

What time is it? What hour is this?
The one that keeps me away.
For only death is willed to come
This Time, This hour, Today.

I wished for me to stay alive,
but wishes don't come true.
The life I've lived is owed to Him,
which is much passed overdue.

I came today to release my thoughts,
to try and get rid of all the pain,
but I think the carpet where I've laid,
might tomorrow be all but stained.

And so I want the world to know,
I've loved and lost, the pain so great,
now, don't think I don't trust my heart,
I just don't trust my fate.

Richard A Hill

Dedicated to the memory of Oregon poet William Stafford

Perhaps most of us can identify with the narrator of Melville's *Bartleby the Scrivener*; who, above all, wanted a peaceful existence, believing that the "easiest way of life is the best." We admire childhood and innocence, seeing in them nostalgic images of individual contentment, collective memories of the "good old days." One company encourages us to "seize the weekend," re-creating the abandon of youth, promising to sell us enough excitement (or ski equipment) to ward off the fear that our lives are otherwise empty spectacles, filled with mind-numbing work or desperate weekends on sofas watching other people have fun. Self-help psychology books fly off the shelf, feeding our abiding faith in our right to pursue happiness.

As deeply held is our belief in freedom. And yet if we pursue this idea, we run into problems. What do we mean? Is freedom John Smith's vision of individual opportunity, where a person can fish to "pull up two pence, six pence, and twelve pence, as fast as you can haul and veer a line"? Or John Winthrop's theological consideration of two kinds of freedom, the "natural" liberty to do what we want or the "civil" freedom to do what we ought (according to Winthrop, one based in human corruption, the other grounded in covenant with God). Do we agree with Benjamin Franklin's certainty that "one Man of tolerable Abilities may work great Changes" in the world as the essence of freedom? Or, with Emerson that freedom requires non-conformity?

These are issues of consequence. Is the "easiest way of life" the best? Is happiness the true goal of our lives? And what do we mean by happiness anyway? Do our fears of incapacity or meaninglessness dampen hope for the individual or collective human potential? Despite our affirmation of freedom, my fear is that what we mean by liberty is individual autonomy. We strive desperately to do "what we want" since few of us have Ben Franklin's faith that we can change the world. We seem to conclude that the world runs along tracks devised by god-like forces beyond our control. The only freedoms we imagine then involve matters of personal choice. It is only public atrocities like 9/11—or the winds of war—that call up pious patriotic platitudes of collective freedom. And then, too often, we believe that our freedom must come at the expense of suffering for others—usually distant neighbors in our global village.

I believe we can do better. A long time ago, I asked a student at Reed College, even then known for its radical individualism (and rigorous curriculum), what made him choose Reed. His answer knocked me for a cognitive loop: "I came to Reed because I wanted to change the world."

I have spent the rest of my life exploring the meaning of what he said, providing a good example of what anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson in *Peripheral Visions* called a "longitudinal epiphany," a moment

of cognitive dissonance followed by years of exploring the implications of the new perception. Perhaps Kurt Vonnegut expresses a similar idea in *Mother Night* when he writes, "We are what we pretend to be; so we should be careful what we pretend." I have aspired to be a teacher, in the terms of William Stafford, one who practices "learning in company with others." Inescapably this makes me a seeker. I teach at a liberal arts university, the goal of which is to liberate us from our ignorance (another possible notion of freedom). Here are some of the philosophical underpinnings for my teaching:

Life involves suffering as its essence. We don't know enough. We fear isolation. We wonder if it all makes sense.

We seek respite from our suffering with humility, tempering our own convictions. At the same time, our humility makes us appropriately skeptical of the conventional attitudes of those who manipulate matters for their own agenda.

Does this mean that there is no truth? American poet William Carlos Williams says, "There are no ideas but in things." Truth comes to us from outside. Is he right? Or do we create truth from the fabric of our own lives, each person inevitably having a unique angle of vision? My answer is no to both. We arrive at Truth through DIALOGUE with our world and other people.

We can distinguish Truths and truths. In fact, this is one of the key purposes of education. How do we tell "better" ideas from "poorer" truths? Poor ideas distance us from reality and from other people. As we bind others with poor truths, we constrict ourselves as well. "Better" ideas set us free ("The Truth shall make you free."). They connect people. We recognize Truths because

They are simple	They are paradoxical
They make things better	They fill us with awe
They are full of mystery	They convict us to act for the Good.
Truths show us that we're in this world together.	

On the other hand, truths are agreements and conventions (relative and changeable—but powerful). We unpeel layers of reality to approach Truth. Truth is ineffable, unsayable. And yet, as the apostle Paul might say, "Truth is patient, truth is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Truth does not delight in evil but rejoices with love. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." Truth is also dynamic, pushy, confrontational, and frustrating; it demands so much of us, perhaps most especially the "easy life." In *Absalom, Absalom!*, William Faulkner calls humans "that species all of whose actions are controlled by words . . . that meager and fragile thread . . . by which the little surface corners and edges of men's secret and solitary lives may be joined for an instant now and then before sinking back into the darkness where the spirit cried for the first time and was not heard and will cry for the last time and will not be heard either."

Bertrand Russell also recognizes that the stakes are high. He shows us that the pursuit of Truth—i. e., education—is political. "Men fear thought more than they fear anything else on earth—more than ruin, more even than death. Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible; thought is merciless

casualty of war, a time when we simplify complexity and seek solace in artificial communities. Brazilian feminist theologian Ivone Gebara says that when "you invite people to think you are inviting revolution."

Education, as I see it, invites us to think. It asks of us only the implausibly possible: to overcome our fears, to wake up, to be critical of the pompous, to act with humility, to expect beauty (In *Herzog*, Saul Bellow says, "Unexpected intrusions of beauty; that's what life is."). In the words of John Keats, it is the "realm of soul-making." The heart of education is our dialogue with the world, the possible outcome of which is the discovery of love.

The revolution education calls for is our participation in the continuing attempt to create the world. And just as Bartleby's narrator has to give up his easy life in light of Bartleby's existential "passive resistance," education beckons us to what William Stafford calls the "rich distress" of becoming human. From this base, we change the world, each in our own way, each in community with others. Allen Ginsberg provides the Big Picture: "The purpose of living is to relieve the suffering; all the rest is drunken dumbshow."

With such stakes, we should be demanding more rather than less of our instructors, pushing them to excellence as we challenge ourselves to fulfill our mission: we are meaning-making "machines," as Buckminster Fuller puts it. Or we could say that we seek to follow God's will, to love others as God loves us. Our job, as William Stafford describes it, is to "find what the world is trying to be."

We seek to create not the good, but the better society. When the issues are war and peace, life and death, meaning and nihilism, when we must raise healthy children, understand how to confront differences (justice, Kim Stafford notes in *Early Morning*, his reflection on the life of his father, is "yielding to delight in human variety"), we need Information, Imagination, Integrity, and Industry. Information frees us from "truths" that deflate rather than empower, liberates us from the tyranny of "truths" that oppress. Imagination engenders "reckless talk" (William Stafford again), helps us see that the unlikely is possible, that we are created not only with original sin but with original blessing as well. Integrity convicts us to seek the Truth: We need to know what we believe (and, with humility, say with Luther, "Here I stand"). Industry is the backbone of democracy, which demands true patriotism (it is my Dad's voice in the back of my head: "Hard work, son. There are no shortcuts.") As 1960s icon Abbie Hoffman explained, "Democracy is not something you believe in . . . it's something you do. You participate. If you stop doing it, democracy crumbles and falls apart." Enjoy your education!

Randy Bush

I've said it, before. I say it each time someone approaches me with a version of those provocative words, "God has really blessed you, hasn't He?" I say, "You know, He has." I usually hold back adding, "And that surprises you?"

Most of those close to me know I'm seriously bugged by our "Christian" practice of pointing at a roast beef or at our kids' Nintendos or at their healthy bodies and saying, "Look how God provides for us. He's blessed our family because He loves us. We are His." Who does God think He is, anyway? More to the point, who do we think He is? Because, if you ask one of our kids (assuming you ever make it past what they know good Christian kids are supposed to say), God is a Baptist, a Lutheran, a Catholic, etc., who loves the world but cares for "His" most of all. His favorite denomination. His favorite theologians. His favorite political system. Even His favorite political party.

We can deny it all we want: The evidence is wherever we are. We have the nicest homes, the most food, the cleanest water, the best medicine, the most Bibles, and more time to study them than most people will ever have. If God cared that much about Somalia or Romania or Iraq or Mexico, wouldn't He give them the same? You'd think so. If you were a Christian kid being taught as much, you bet you'd think so.

I'm not suggesting we skip God and thank Ronald McDonald for our daily bread. But, really, who does God think He is? I'll tell you: He thinks He's our hope and our provider and our salvation. He also thinks He's "their" hope and "their" provider and "their" salvation (even if "they" are busy dying of AIDS or of hunger or from falling bombs). He thinks He's the answer to the deepest longing of the loneliest soul on Earth. Anywhere on Earth. But who do we think He is? Our kids could probably tell us.

Yeah, I'm cynical. And I'm worried about us, and about some of the unintended poisons we pass on to each generation. I can't answer for what the Taliban teach their kids. From what I've heard, they think they're God's favorites. But I have to answer for what I believe and model. Years of fighting cancer, and of watching what worry has done to my gentle wife, and of seeing a few friends make their last stands against their cancers, have scratched some things into the sore, soft places of my heart. There, right in front of me if I close my eyes are the words, "For God so *loves* the world."

If "they" are wasting away from cancer or from too little food, no medicine, no Bibles, it doesn't mean God loves "them" less—or is holding back His blessing. It doesn't mean He loves "us" more. He's doing all He can both within the rules He has set for Himself and within the outline of His perfect plan. But if we don't explain that to our kids, who will?

THE CELTIC HEART

Phillip A. Kennedy

To my family

Singing from across the seas,
it beckons for me to come back.
Deep within,
I yearn to join its calling.

Magick from the beginning of time,
unbreakable, unscathable, unending.
Life began from this incantation.

The heritage of my ancestors,
Loving forever, fighting forever, living forever.
I belong and my heart is one with its magick.

The four winds blow across the stone circle.
Dancing, singing, feasting,
we gather in celebration of life.

Sings from across the seas,
it beckons for me to come back.
Deep within,
I yearn to join its calling.

COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

Phillip A. Kennedy

I look to the stage;
I feel the past, present and future.
Specters living on from shows long past,
the emotions are strong.
Laughter, sadness, anger, jealousy,
haunting the old place.

Never leaving the memories.
Never ending the journey.
The show must go on.

Walking the old passages,
Singing with the piano,
the specters dance around the dark void.
Teaching us how to live,
loving every new show in production.
They watch us, as we have watched then.

I look to the stage;
I feel the past, present and future.

THE ENGLISH GLOVES

Petr Maucy

As everyone, when
Mark came to America,
He got his pair of burlap-
English gloves.

Mark was an immigrant;
He wore gloves always.
They protected his hands,
When laboring hard.

For many years
He didn't take off his gloves.
They made his life uneasy.
And then, burlap fabric wiped his tears.

One day Mark met an American girl
And became a sculptor.
Without hammer, without chisel
He started to shape a stone.

After a while, the stone became more real,
And his gloves became tatters.
After finishing the statue,
His palms were naked.

Love and patience liberated his hands,
The girl felt the warmth of his palms,
The stone turned into a piece of art,
And Mark set himself free
From the slavery of language gloves.

SECOND ANNUAL THEMED ESSAY CONTEST:
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

1st Place: "Resolution"
2nd Place: "On The Right Tract Baby..."
Honorable Mention: "Evolution"

Judging writing is not something I do with a great deal of zeal. My own expertise tends to be in a field considered by many to be much more objective: natural science. When asked by Dr. Edwards if I would agree to assess this year's essays for the *Promethean*, at first I hesitated. After all, what would a fly-pusher know about rhetorical technique or grammatical structure?

What convinced me to agree to this task was my realization that good science is not so far from good writing. Both are accomplished by individuals passionate about uncovering a reality, either in nature or in their own life (or both!). After that bit of self-discovery, I agreed to take up the challenge that was placed before me. Please forgive my limited experience in literary criticism.

I decided to use a single criterion for judging the quality of these essays: Which essay revealed the most profound insights about the author? As I read the packet of essays, I was struck by the honesty and self-effacing nature of the compositions. The authors were clearly intent on sharing some part of their souls with the reader. The essays were often brutal in their revelations about the frailties and eccentricities of the creators. Most revealed a great deal of progress in the author's understanding of life.

While it is most difficult to judge such essays effectively, I am forced to by the nature of this project. All of the essayists are to be commended for their efforts. The following essays were selected as my personal favorites.

Honorable Mention:

The essay entitled "Evolution" expressed the frustrations of the author's inability to keep New Year's resolutions in the past and what those experiences were beginning to teach the writer about life itself. Providing the analogy of the late-blooming rose was an effective technique in expressing the author's changed perspective. Life is not so much planned; it must simply be lived. That demonstrated a great deal of growth on the part of the writer and their manner of thinking about the future. It also seemed as if the author had developed a greater sense of peace as a result of this growth.

Second Place:

"On The Right Track Baby..." was a fascinating look at the essayist's growth in self-understanding and self-love. Self-love can be a frightful attribute, but when

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accomplished in the Biblical sense (i.e. to "love your neighbor as you love yourself"), it is a most essential and healthy component of a balanced life. Each set of contrasting resolutions gave a glimpse of the growth taking place. I was most impressed with the maturity demonstrated in "This year's resolution." The stark transition from freshmen expectations to this year's realities provided a most interesting method of highlighting the essential transformation the author had been undergoing.

First Place:

Of all the essays, however, the one that revealed to me more about the inner being of the author than any other was the essay simply entitled "Resolution." It grabbed my attention from the very first line with its description of the personal torment of a person afflicted with a very real psychological abnormality: mysophobia...the fear of being dirty. Perhaps it was due to my own experience with a brother suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder, or perhaps it was the manner in which the author bantered with herself/himself in the text, the result was a compelling and authentic, albeit brief, account of inner struggles faced by the author. That is why I have judged this essay to be the best of the lot.

My congratulations to all those who offered submissions for this contest. I found all the readings very interesting. Keep up the good work!

Dr. Chuck Kunert
Dean, College of Theology, Arts, & Sciences

RESOLUTION

Marie C. Ballance

ONE

The clock on the wall is my enemy. I am in a race against time. *If only*, I say to myself, *if only I can last five minutes I will be on my way to normalcy*. Normal people resist the urge. Normal people don't even *have* the urge. *There is no need to do this*, I say to myself. *Don't give in*. I look at my hands as they begin to shake.

TWO

My heart pounds. There is a ringing in my ears. Thoughts are racing through my brain, struggling to overpower each other. Silence is elusive; my mind yearns for peace, but it is nowhere to be found. I am trapped in a mysophobic universe. To have a moment's peace I must escape.

THREE

Those on the outside offer no help. When I offer explanation for my behavior, I receive nothing but ridicule for my pains. Ridicule goaded me into this resolution. I am convinced this is for the best. My determination is shaky at best, but I must stand firm. If I don't look at my hands, maybe they will stop trembling. Maybe they'll go away.

FOUR

Sweat drips from my forehead. I may break. My special friend calls my name in a way few understand. The voice, audible only to myself, intrudes upon my chaotic thoughts and weak determination. *Why do you resist? Give in. It's for the best. It's the only way you will find peace*. My body trembles as I announce my resolution to the empty room: "I will not break! I *will* be normal!"

FIVE

Fear, my adversary, creeps into my mind's cavern, dragging mysophobia behind him, a triumphant look in his eyes. *You are going to get sick. How many people have touched that doorknob today alone?* The name of every germ or bacteria known to man rushes toward my mind's eye like kamikaze pilots intent on their mission.

It is pointless to expect victory.

I surrender.

I move toward the sink and touch the friendly arm of the faucet.

I wash my hands.

My resolution lasted five minutes. A record.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK BABY...

Second Place Winner

Alissa Harris

Let me describe for you the awe that I feel when looking at my list of New Year's Resolutions over the years (yes I save them, like a packrat). Hab! Right. It is impossible. I wish I could convey to you the awe in my heart I have for the changes I have made in who I am, who I want to be, what is important. Life has taught me so much that I am so very grateful for.

Take a look!

New Year's Resolutions

Freshman year: Become independent from my parents. Set up my own life away from them. Keep as little contact with them as possible. Prove that I don't need them anymore.

This year's resolution: Try to call them as often as possible. Remember how very important they are to my life and just how grounded I feel as an adult woman, having them in my life. Thank them every day in my heart for doing the best they could with what they had for me. Work toward growing the seed of friendship, over the years. I need my parents and they need me as well.

Freshman year: Don't gain the freshman fifteen. For that, my friend, would be the absolute kiss of death. To avoid this, work out everyday, eat light, liquid fast when your weight creeps up.

This year's resolution: Continue to love and accept myself no matter what. Remember that beauty is what is inside of you and work towards the ultimate goal of being happy. Work out because it makes you feel good. Eat for energy and health. Don't worry about your weight, life is too sort to spend it counting calories.

Freshman year: Rope the boy you want.

This year's resolutions: Want the boy you roped. Remember that loving some one is about deciding to love them. Learn and grow from loving Jared and keep him an important part of your life. Move forward in the relationship remembering that love may not always be fun, it may not always be easy, but the choice to grow with some one is the choice to build with that person. This means loving beyond the faults and quirks.

Freshman year: Get all "A's."

This year's resolution: Getting good grades isn't my emphasis anymore. Thinking I had to have good grades sent me into this mindset that school was (unfun) work. If you are in the field you are truly passionate about, this is not the case. What I resolve to do is give myself more time to study and learn more about the class material. I love my major so much but it is hard to find time to do the research that I love, outside of what is needed for the classroom. Since this is such a life enhancing experience, I need to make more time to enjoy it.

Freshman year: Decide whom you want to be friends with and work to build up that social network.

This year's resolution: Remember that your friends aren't chosen; they are made by living and work to be kind and polite to everyone, since friends arise from the oddest places. Keep contact with the wonderful, versatile people you have encountered and offer support and a shoulder to lean on when possible; often those people who count on you will come through for you later.

Freshman year: Keep my appearance up, that includes the hair and makeup.

This year's resolution: Keep right and peace in my soul and beauty will follow

Freshman year: Employ self-analysis to find faults and work on them.

This year's resolution: Try hard to stop changing things about myself or trying to fit other peoples ideas of great. Remember that what may not be splendid in another's eyes, is the unique shine of my own star. I give myself permission not to know how to cook and to be ditzzy.

Freshman year: Quite slacking off and get a car, job, etc.

This year's resolution: Quite running too hard and stop trying to do it all. Hit the snooze a couple of times a week. It won't cause the world to blow up.

Overview Of Freshman Goals: Be Perfect

Overview Of This Year's Goals: Be Perfectly Happy! Be my own best friend.

"Replace anxiety in favor of gratefulness."

EVOLUTION

Honorable Mention

Jan Cassady

I've never been able to figure these things out, these sort of "What's coming up for next year?" type things. I've almost invariably been completely wrong. Everything that I've ever planned for the coming year, all my New Year's resolutions, generally turned out completely different than I wanted. Unexpected things happened instead, evolutionary things. Rather than my predictions, life events took control evolving me in the most unexpected directions.

The trick with New Year's resolutions is to make plans but be willing to discard them should the universe have something else in mind. When I get too committed to my resolutions, when I feel that unless they materialize I have failed or been wrong, I tend to not see the other forces at play in my life. They are forces much wiser than me. They know ultimately what I need and where I should evolve.

I have had New Year's Eves spent with lovers who were not lovers in the coming year despite what I believed they would be. I have spent New Year's Eves alone that did not produce lonely years thereafter. Each New Year's I believed I knew what was coming up and set my sights on achieving those goals. I invested heavily emotionally in the outcome I wanted each New Year's Eve.

I suppose I did this out of fear. If I could predict, I believed, the universe made sense. If my predictions did not materialize, it created uncertainty and uncertainty was equated with fear. But when the universe had something else in mind for my new year, it took quite a bit of effort to let go of my resolutions and let evolution (or God) have its way.

I have to trust that the universe is going to give me what I need to grow. I have to trust that it is safe to let go of the control my resolutions or predictions appear to bring me. I have to trust that the universe provides me opportunities that are far more important to who I am and what my destiny is about than whether or not I lose five pounds. I have to trust that what God has planned for me is far better than anything I could dream up. I have to trust in the evolutionary nature of my life.

So here it is again, time for a New Year's resolution.

I have a rose bush in front of my door that is in full blossom and it is the middle of winter. I have had a rose bush in this location for nearly 10 years and it always flowers in May, June and July, sometimes August. This year it is in bloom in December, right before New Year's Eve. Right before the time for new predictions. Maybe it's just the warm temperatures we've been having. It confuses the plants. Maybe...

In the book of Genesis it says that God first spoke to Moses in the form of a bush that was burning in the desert but was not being consumed. Moses asked God how he would answer when the others wanted to know what God's name was. In other words, they would want to know how to believe that it was God who actually spoke to Moses. And God replied that Moses should tell them that God said: "I AM THAT I AM." I assume this means that God was saying that whatever people want to believe God is, that is what God is. God is what we make God out to be.

So now, in the middle of winter, I have a rose bush that is flowering out of season. I have no idea what it means for the coming year. And I've stopped trying to guess. I've also stopped making resolutions. This New Year's Eve instead, I'm going to step back and let the universe guide me, secure in the knowledge that my life is unfolding and evolving as God wants it to.



Concordia University Portland, Oregon

April 10 - 13, 2003

The Edward de Vere Studies Conference is the world's largest convocation of scholars to gather annually, at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, to share new research on the life and works of Elizabethan court poet and playwright, Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. The conference is especially dedicated to the presentation of scholarly research.

We invite all to attend who are interested in exploring the circumstances that led to the creation and publication of the Shakespeare canon. Students, staff, and faculty at Concordia University may register free of charge by contacting Dr. Wright.

All others, please see the website:

<http://www.deverestudies.org>

The exclusive right to reproduce the Hilliard portrait of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, is extended to the Edward de Vere Studies Conference by the kind permission of His Grace, the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, KT, VRD

CONTRIBUTORS

Timothy Allen is in the MAT program at Concordia University. He writes, "One of my hobbies includes tap dancing and this was the seed for my poem "taps". Tap dancing is an art which collaborates qualities, oversees stereotypes and defines individuals."

Marie C. Ballance graduated with a Humanities degree from Concordia University in May 2002 and is currently enrolled in the M.A.T. program. She would like to dedicate this essay to her fellow OCD sufferers, who inspired her to write this piece.

Randy Bush writes "Emergence, 1957. I chase woods, deserts, breadmaking, and medieval history. From my lair in the CU Library, I watch and wonder if we're really so different from our smelly ancestors. We seem to make the same huge, messy footprints."

Jan Cassady is an Elementary Education major, planning to graduate in 2004. She writes "I wrote the essay because I am letting my Higher Power evolve me in the direction he wants me to go, not in the way I want my life to go, so I quit making New Year's resolutions and instead I am evolving as the universe feels I should."

Becky L. Delaware transferred to Concordia University from Phoenix, Arizona as a junior. She writes, "I began writing during my high school years and now have a fairly substantial collection. I am especially proud of this poem because it proves how strong I was to get through the depression I was feeling at the time and the strength I currently have to combat it."

Sarah Hames is a senior in the DCE program and will begin her parish internship this summer. Sarah has served as the Christian Life Ministries coordinator for the past two years. She is originally from Suisun, California.

Alissa Harris is studying to be a high school counselor and will also endeavor to be a columnist or reporter for issues pertaining to mental health. She writes, "I wrote this essay because I wanted to share the wonderful blessing that my life has been with others and hope to in that way, have an effect. I also call it a good start to my ultimate goal of helping young adults find their own personal power."

Richard Hill has taught at Concordia for 27 years. The essay here is motivated in part by reading Kim Stafford's reflection on his father *Early Morning*—and beyond that, by a lifetime of searching for how education contributes to better human communities.

Phillip A. Kennedy is a Junior, majoring in Psychology. He writes, " 'Comedy and Tragedy' is written about my experiences in theatre. It is also about the history and the emotion of theatre itself. 'The Celtic Heart' is written about my heritage and the pride I have in my culture."

Charles Kunert, Ph.D. (U. of Oregon, '85), has been a faculty member at Concordia since 1969 and currently serves as Dean of the College of Theology, Arts, & Sciences. A molecular biologist by profession, he is Professor of Biology and still teaches in the areas of genetics, molecular biology, and evolution. He is the author of several scientific articles and science textbooks, and is currently authoring a work on the intersection of faith and science in the area of understanding our biological origins.

Petr Maucy is a freshman, majoring in business, whose native country is the Czech Republic in central Europe. He writes, "I am three years in America now and I feel like an immigrant."

Melanie Mitchell is a senior at Concordia University's secondary education program. During the spring, she is teaching eighth grade language arts and literature at Fernwood Middle School. She plans to graduate this May and jump into the teaching world with both feet. Her practicum students at Rex Putnam High School inspired her story. The characters are very loosely based on some of the students she has observed both while teaching high school and when she was a student herself.

Jennifer Smith is a senior at Concordia, majoring in English. She is preoccupied at the moment working very hard to graduate and stay sane, but she hopes you enjoy her poems.

Kim Stafford is director of the Northwest Writing Institute at Lewis & Clark College. He is the author of *The Muses Among Us: Eloquent Listening and Other Pleasures of the Writer's Craft* (U. Georgia Press, 2003).

Tennille Wright is currently an MAT student at Concordia, with a Language Arts endorsement area at the high school/middle school level. She graduated from George Fox University in May 2002, with a double major in Writing/Lit and Philosophy. She writes, "I may pursue more schooling for a MFA in Creative Writing, or look for a teaching job." And adds, "I've been writing poetry for as long as I can remember."

